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THE
KINGDOM
OF
HEAVEN
EXPLAIN'D.

And the way to Glory Manifested.

By Christ Jesus, the Lord and King of that Kingdom.

Held forth in a Parable, in *Mat.* 22. from
verse 1. to ver. 13.

With some Brief Meditations upon the said Parable.

By James Pope.

If I have told you Earthly things and ye believe not : How shall ye believe if I tell you of Heavenly things.

And he spake many things to them in Parables. Mat. 13. 3.

London, Printed for the Author, and are to be sold by Samuel Spryer at the Bell in Little-Britain. 1675.

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For as, Printed for the Author, and are to be sold by
Samuel Smith in the Bell in Little Britain, 1704.

THE
P R E F A C E



Have been Young, and now
am Old, having lived to the
account (almost) that Mo-
ses gives of the Age of a
Man; Psal. 90. 10. Un-
to which but few attain;
and being therefore now in
expectation that I may quick-

ly be called hence; it was with great desire
upon my heart, that I might leave something
with my Friends and Family; and my loving
Neighbours; That if the will of the Lord be
so it might be of some advantage to them, when
they shall see me no more.

The Subject of the ensuing discourse is weigh-
ty; though the Instrument is weak; for which
cause some perhaps may say, Could not this man
have found something else to do, then to write
a Book; seeing this Nation doth abound with
good Books that have been written by Learn-
ed and able persons, both Ancient and Modern.

The Preface.

It is true; and blessed be God for plenty: Yet nevertheless, this may be of some advantage at least to some, who have neither Money to buy, nor time to Read the Books, the Objection mentioned; and for such this may be of use.

And besides, though the Nation doth abound with good Books, yet the houses of (at least) many People, do not abound with them; nor their minds with the knowledge of them: Who perhaps will have a mind to hear what this Babler will say; and it is possible some one or other may gain something thereby: Which if it might be so, it would make amends for all my troubles in Writing.

I know my end is to Alarm some poor souls, and to persuade them to hearken to the invitation of the Gospel; that so they may come and be welcome to the Marriage; for they and they only are Blessed, Revel. 19. 9. There will be; but, Come ye Blessed, receive the Kingdom; and Go ye Cursed into everlasting fire: Which will certainly be the Portion of all those that neglect to hear, and make ready to come; upon the bidding to the Wedding, by the Servants that are sent out to that end and purpose.

I shall subject the following Discourse to the perusal and censure of the Reader, for whose

The Preface.

for sake I have Written it : and especially my Neighbours of the Town of Hempsted; whom I could be glad to serve in any thing within my power ; in thankful remembrance of their Kindness shewed to me and my Friends, which I do not forget.

I would also commend it to my Friends and dear Relations ; committing you all to the Grace of God, with my poor Muse now cast into the Treasury, remaining,

Your suppliant at the Throne
of Grace.

J. P.

THE

The Preface

I have written it : and especially my
Neighbours of the Town of Hampton ; whom
I could be glad to see in any happy
power : in which I have been of late
Kiln's friend : and my friends, which
I do not forget.

I would also commend it to my Friends and
near Relations ; recommending them to the Grace
of God, with a poor little gift into the
Treasury, remaining.

Your Obedient and true Son
of Grace.

J. B.

THE

~~THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN~~
**THE
KINGDOM
OF
HEAVEN
EXPLAINED.**

Matth. 22, 2.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain King, that made a Marriage for his Son.

THe Lord Jesus spake much to the Jews in Parables, and in a foregoing Parable, he shews them what would be the event of their dealing with himself, and his Servants, which he sent unto them: and they themselves pass sentence. *He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will cut out the Vineyard.*

The Kingdome of

gard to other *Husband-men* ; that will render
the *Fruit* in their *Season*. Which hath been
fully accomplished both to them and to us :
they are destroyed, and we Gentiles saved ;
they are broken off, and we if we believe
shall be Grafted in.

They are deprived of the Gospel, and we
enjoy it : which is the sume of the Parable
now under consideration.

And I shall take notes of three things.

First, What the Kingdome of Heaven is.

Secondly, How it may be compared to a
Marriage.

Thirdly, Wherein the Parable doth not
hold ; for in all things Parables do not hold.

And then I shall desire to consider wherein
the whole may be profitable to us.

As to the first ; a Kingdom doth impose a
King and Subjects, and so do the Kingdome
of Heaven, supposeth a Heavenly King, and
Heavenly Subjects ; and then Christ and his
Church

Heaven explained.

Church are to be taken for the Kingdom of Heaven.

But then the Question is, what is the Church? The answer is, it is to be considered First, In its Militant, or else, Secondly, In its Triumphant state; and in both these it will fall under a two fold consideration.

The First, viz. The Militant or warring state; we must consider it as it's Catholic, consisting of the universal Body: Among whom there is no Profane, nor Hypocritical Person.

And in this sense they are called, *The General Assembly, and Church of the first born, that are written in Heaven.* Heb. 12. 23. *My Dove, my undefiled* is but one Song of Songs, 6. 8. 2. *They are the whole Family in Heaven and Earth.* Eph. 3. 15. *Small the Saints make up but one Church in this sense.*

But in a second sense, the Church is divided into particular Churches, as *in Asia,* Rev. 1. 4. *In Galacia divers,* Gal. 1. 22. *As also at Corinth, at Rome, at Antioch, and more that might be mentioned.*

Now

The Kingdom of

10 Now in the Church in this sense there were in the primitive days, and have been since, and will be so to the last; some Hypocrites *John 2:13. Jude 4. Esay 33. 14. Sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness surpriseth the Hypocrites.* Which seems to be at the last day: There were foolish Virgins among the Wise, when the Mid night cry is made, *Mat. 25.* For the Net of the Gospel doth bring to shore bad Fish as well as good. *Mat. 13. 47, 48.* But it greatly concerns the Churches to take care that such be not there by their allowance, if they are made manifest to be such.

But the Church Triumphant, is also the Kingdome of Heaven, and falls under a two-fold consideration also; and First, We may consider it as with respect to the first state of Glory, in which state Christ and his Saints shall Reign Gloriously together, according to, *Dan. 7. 9, 10. I beheld, till the Thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose Garment was as White as Snow, and the Hair of his Head as the pure Wool; his Throne was like the burning flame; and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him, thousand thousands ministered unto him; and ten thousand times ten thousand*

Heaven Explained.

thousand stood before him; the Judgment was
set and the Books were opened.

This must needs be a day of great Glory,
when this glorious King shall come, with his
Glorious attendants, to sit upon his Glorious
Throne, when all other Thrones must be cast
down. But what is this to the Saints? I
answer, When Christ shall possess the King-
dome, his Saints shall possess it with him,
as appears by comparing Dan. 7. 14. with
the 22. and 27 verses together: in ver. 14.
There was given him (viz. the Son of Man)
that came with the Clouds of Heaven) Domi-
nion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all Peo-
ple, Nations, and Languages, should serve
and obey him. And in ver. 21. 22. It is said:
The Horns made War with the Saints, and pre-
vailed against them, until the ancient of days
came, and judgment was given to the Saints
of the most high; and the time came that the
Saints possessed the Kingdom. And ver. 27.
And the Kingdom, and Dominion, and the great-
ness of the Kingdom under the whole Heaven,
shall be given to the People of the Saints of the
most high.

Quest. When shall this be accomplished?

Answ.

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Answer I think I may safely say, of *that*
day and hour knoweth no Man.

But this we know, that it is to be after
the Seventh Angel sound his Trumpet; and
the Mystery of the Kingdom of God is fi-
nished. *Rev.* 10. 7. and, 11. 15. compared;
but let it suffice, that we know it shall be a
state of very great Glory.

And whether it shall be a thousand years
Glory, before Christs visible coming; as
some say; or that it shall begin when he
shall come from Heaven to judge the World,
as others say; is a Mystery too great for me
to hold forth, but it will be the first state of
the Church Triumphant; a state of Transcen-
dent Glory: And blessed are they that are
called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
Rev. 19. 9.

Again, The final state of the Church Tri-
umphant is, when the Lord Jesus shall deli-
ver up the Kingdom to God his Father, that
God may be all in all. *1 Cor.* 15. 24. Which
will be when the Lord Christ hath finished the
Judgment, and the final Sentence is past, of
Come ye Blessed of my Father, and receive the
Kingdom.

And

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And ye go ye. Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

Now both these states, are so Glorious, as can no way be conceived of by Mortal man. 1 Cor. 2. 9.

And thus briefly I have passed through the first thing propounded; viz. what the Kingdom is.

The second thing is, Whertin it resembleth a Princely Marriage.

First, In the Marriage of Great Persons, the Father doth determine to provide a Match for his Son: Even so God the Father did determine, to take a Wife for his Son Christ. Ephes. 1. 22, 23. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World. Rom. 8. 29, 30.

Secondly, As the Father intends, so the Son accepts, Ephes. 5. 25, 26, 27. Christ the Son gave himself for his Church, to wash it, to cleanse it, and to present it to himself a glorious Church, &c.

Thirdly, There is a time appointed for the

The Kingdom of

the Marriage Solemnity. *Rev. 19. 7. The Marriage of the Lamb is come, &c.*

Firstly, Some are sent out to invite, and hence we may take notice, who were the first intended Guests, and that was the Jews, in whom Christ sent, *First, The Apostles;*

Mat. 10. 1. &c.

Secondly, He sent the Seventy. *Luke 10.*

1. They were they that first were called to come; of whom some sited the invitation; preferring their **Worldly Morsels** before Gospel-privileges. *Luke 14. 18, 19, 20.*

And others of them **blasphemed**; yea, **they slew the Messengers** that were sent; yea, **they slew the Son himself.** *Mat. 23. 31, 32. &c.*

Then Paul and Barnabas were bold, and said, **it is meet the word of God should first be spoken to you;** but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life: **we turn to the Gentiles.** *Acts 13. 46.*

These were the Church to whom the lively Oracles were given. These were the Murderers whom GOD destroyed, whose City was burnt. *Mat. 22. 7.* Which was fulfilled by

Vej-

Heaven Explained.

Vespasian, and *Titus*, the Roman Emperors; about 40 years after Christ: When they and their City were in a most dreadful manner destroy'd, by Fire, Famine, Sword, and Pestilence, fulfilling the Words of Christ! *Matth. 24. 21.*

But to whom did the King send when the *Jews* were rejected?

Answer. To the *Gentiles*: Who were as the Blind, the Halt, and the Maimed, like poor Vagrant Beggars, in the High-ways, and under the Hedges. *Eph. 2. 12.* Being without Christ, Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the Covenants of Promise, without Hope, and without God in the World.

Poor Sinners of the *Gentiles* were called, of whom was Constituted the first Gentile Church, to wit, at *Antioch*, *Acts 11. 26.* the Churches in *Galatia*, *Gal. 1. 2.* From these came the 7 Churches in *Asia*, with many more.

Against a great Wedding there is great preparation beforehand, against the time appointed.

First, Of suitable Apparel, so in this also, the Bride must have her Glorious Apparel; *The Kings Daughter is all Glorious within*, *Psal. 45. 13, 14.* *Rev. 19. 8, 9.* To her

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was granted she should be arrayed with fine Linnen, clean and white; and the fine Linnen is the Righteousness of Saints.

Secondly, There must be preparation by the Guests; they must have Wedding Garments. *Mat. 22. 11. 12.*

Thirdly, There must be preparation of provision, for entertainment; so it must be in the Spiritual Marriage; as it resembles the Kingdom of Heaven. *Prov. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. E. 4. 25. 6.* And it is the custom to have something for the Guests to refresh themselves with, before the Dinner be ready; and before the Bridegroom comes to sit down at Table: So is it here, the blessed Bridegroom doth prepare good things for his Guests before the great Dinner be served in; he hath appointed for them his Laws, and blessed Ordinances; to comfort and cheer them beforehand; *Wherein they have Communion not onely one with another; but with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. 1 Joh. 3. 4. 1 Cor. 10. 16. 17.* The Cup of Blessing which we Bless, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ? the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? for we being many, are one Body: for we are all partakers of that one Bread.

Little do the poor World think what the people

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people of the Lord do enjoy in Corners; They can say at sometimes, *They have meat to eat that the World knows not of*: They can get into a Corner, and poure out their souls to God, when their Enemies persecute them.

142. *Psal. 2. 5, 6, 7. Compare Psal. 102. 17. He will regard the Prayer of the Destitute, and will not despise their Prayer.* The Lord makes the hearts of his Guests to rejoyce, before they come to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of their Fathers.

Sixthly, There must be a set time for to Solemnize the Marriage; so it is in this Spiritual; as it resembles the Kingdom of Heaven. *Rev. 19. 7. The Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her self ready. Psal. 45. 9. Kings Daughters were among thy Honourable Women, upon thy right hand did stand the Queen in Gold of Ophir, ver. 14. She shall be brought unto the King in Raiment of Needle Work.*

It will be very Glorious Raiment, *That shall cause her to shine as the Sun in the Kingdom. Mat. 13. 43.*

Seventhly. There is great joy in the Marriage Chamber; so will it be in this Spiritual Marriage; as it resembles the Kingdom of Heaven. *Revel. 19. 7. Let us rejoyce and be glad, and give Honour to him; for the*

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Marriage of the Lamb is come.

No Tongue can expresse the Glorious rejoycing of that day, the Heavenly Musick will then strike up; *Rev. 5. 8, 9, 10. Chap. 15. 3. 4.* Now shall the Bride and Bridegroom solace themselves in each others love; unspeakably, beyond the Joy of any other Bride-Groom, and Bride in all the World.

The third thing propounded, is to note some things wherein this, and other Marriages do not resemble each other.

As first, All the appointing, inviting, preparing, rejoycing, compleating, and finishing; is all upon a natural account: and the other all upon a Spiritual account; as hath been already shown.

And as it is natural and not spiritual, so also it is temporal and not perpetual.

First, All other Wedding days have an end, but this shall never end; For those that dye before Christs comming, shall be both caught up to meet the Lord in the Air; and so shall be ever with the Lord: These are words to comfort one another withal. *1 Thes. 4. 17, 18.*

Secondly In other Weddings they put off their VWedding Apparel again; but it is not so here. *Daniel 12. 3.* They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the Firmament, and those turn many to Righteousness, as the Stars for ever and ever.

Thirdly,

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Thirdly. In all other wedding feasts, those that partake thereof will hunger again, and thirst again; but not so in this Spiritual Marriage. *Isa. 49.* read from *ver. 8. to ver. 13.* *Rev. 7. 16, 17.*

Fourthly, In other Marriages the joy and the sound of the Musick ceases; but in this Spiritual Marriage, they shall sing the Song of *Moses* and the Lamb eternally. *Rev. 4. 8, 9, 10, 11.*

Fifthly, In other Marriages the beauty and comeliness of the Bride decays in a little time; but not so here, in the Kingdom there shall be no withered faces; nor eyes sunk in their holes; no aking Backs, nor feeble Limbs. *Zach. 12. 8.*

Sixthly, All other Bridegrooms and their Brides, must part again in a little time? Oh how soon is their days of Feasting and Joy, turned into sorrow and mourning! and those that did follow them to the Wedding, in a little time follow them to the Grave? This daily experience proves. But this Heavenly Bridegroom, never shall; never will, part with his lovely Bride. No, Death is now Conquer'd; and were it not; it could not separate between the Bride-groom Christ, and his Bride the Church; no, nor with any one.

B. 3 Mem.

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Member of it, Rom 8. 35. 36, 37, 38, 39.

Seventhly, In other Marriages, the Guests and the Bride, are distinct; but not so in this, for every one that cometh to the Marriage upon the call or invitation; shall be a Member of the Bride, and shall enjoy full Communion with the Bridegroom. 1 John

1. 3, 4. *That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father; and with his Son Jesus Christ. These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.* Psal. 16. 11. *In thy presence is fulness of Joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

Fourthly. The fourth thing, and the last, is to consider how we may improve this Parable, to our own Advantage.

Use. And first, It shows us how we ought to admire the goodness of God, in sending to invite us poor blind, lame, high-way Vagrants to come to the Glorious Marriage, *That we who were Children of Wrath by nature,* Eph. 2. 3. *And had been long treasuring up Wrath against the day of Wrath, and Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God, should be invited in.* Rom. 2. 5. Oh, infinite mercy! that we, *who were dead in trespasses and sins, should be quickned; and that together with Christ, and saved by Grace.* Oh

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Oh that the Lord should pass by the wide World ! and send his Gospel into this poor Island ; and plant it here, and continue it here so long a time as he hath done : notwithstanding all the opposition to the contrary ; nay, notwithstanding the slight esteem of it, and the little improvement that hath been made by this poor Nation, of this so Rich a mercy : Oh ! how hath the Lord been sending his Servants among us ? raising them up, and furnishing them with the Choice Gifts of his Spirit ; who have spent their time and strength to serve the Lord, in the Ministry of the Gospel, but Oh ! How few have hearkened to the Call ? Do not most say with the *Jews*, we cannot come ? we have other work to do ? and have not many evil entreated them that have been sent unto them ? to say no worse of it : but let those that fear the Lord, and have been moderate to come in at the Call, say let the Lord be praised : seeing he hath left a great part of the world to worship the Devil ; a great part to worship *Mahomet* ; and a great part of the world to worship the *Beast*. *Rev. 13. 8.* All these are without the Gospel, without any means to come to the right knowledge of God, and Christ ; Nay, they have that which is a great deal worse then nothing, being deceived by those Impostures,

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whose work it is to bewitch poor souls, and to prevent them of good, any good; and make them seven fold more the Children of Wrath, by their means.

But blessed be your Eyes, that you see, and your Ears that you hear. Oh let it be the care of every one that hath tasted that the Lord is gracious to be by all means endeavouring to shew forth the praises of him that hath called you out of darkness, into his marvellous light. 1 Pet. 2. 9

Secondly, A second use to be made of this Parable, is to examine whether we have hearkened to the invitation or no; and to help herein, the Scripture doth afford us many rules to try by; I shall name some.

First, Note, As first, If we have indeed hearkned to the Lords Call, then your understanding is enlightned, which before was dark; Compare Eph. 1. 18. with the 4. 18. By this we come to know what is the riches of the Glory of his inheritance, in the Saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward that believe; which we understood not before; by this new Light, we come to see how miserable our estate was by nature; and what necessity of being brought out of that state, or else that eternal VVrath must have been our Portion; By this we come to see an excellen-

cy

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cy in the Gospel, and the knowledge of God thereby : Now we see a Glorious beauty in Holiness ; and in the the ways of God : before we counted them Fools that made much ado about Religion, *To know how they might walk and please God* : But now I see they were wiser then we : Now we can prize a Crucified Christ, and an interest in him above the world, and all that is in it : as *Paul* did, *Phil.* 3. 7, 8, 9.

2. *Note*, A second Note, If we have embraced the Call of God in the Gospel, our affections are set upon other Objects then they were before ; for before the world ; either in the pleasures of it, or the riches of it, or the honour of it, carried away our joy, our delight, our desire, our love, but now we can rejoyce in Gods word above all. *Pf.* 119. 162. *I rejoyce in thy word as he that findeth great spoyle* ; This is word to be desired by a Glorious soul ; then much fine Gold ; and is sweeter then Honey, and the Honey Comb. *Pfal.* 19. 10.

Now the desire is after the knowledge of God and Christ, which before was after earthly things ; which carries the soul out to the use of such means as tends to the attaining thereof ; as praying, reading, hearing, conversing ; and though others may do the same thing, yet not to the same end, they do it to
grow

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grow thereby. *1 Pet. 2. 2.* To wit, That they may grow in grace, and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Their love is now set on God, and the ways of God, and the People of God, which before were despised. But I do but hint those things, which will be found in those that have embraced the Call.

3. *Note.* Again, When Souls have embraced the Call, they can never more after that; sin with full consent of the will: If any Evil be committed, it is by means of the Law of the Members, that doth rebel against the Law of the Mind; which causes a continual War between the flesh, and the Spirit; which carries the Soul to God to cry out for help against this Rebel, this Law in the Members; as *David*, in *Psal. 19. 12, 13.* It will be the great care of such Souls to keep their Garment undefiled. *Rev. 3. 4.* *He that hath this hope, purifieth himself even as he is pure.* *Joh. 3. 3.*

Let us carefully, and faithfully, prove our selves by these things, and by what else the Lord may help us in, that we may not miscarry in this matter, that is of such wonderful concernment, as relates to our eternal weal, or woe; our eternal life, or eternal death; for a little time will bring to the gates of Eternity; and time will be no more. Then it will be

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be too late for foolish Virgins, to cry, *Lord, open to us* : Now is the time for us to hear, that our Souls may live. *Isa. 55. 3.*

But suppose we have all this while neglected to hear, and have had our excuses as the bidden Guest had : Let me admire the patience of God that has spared us so long, while we have provok'd him by delaying to hear : O doubtless, he might have said long ago, *They shall not tast of my Supper* : But seeing it is no worse, but that the Lord is still sending after us ; let us take heed of delays, lest we come to the Gate of Mercy when it is shut, and must never more be opened.

3. *Use.* A Third use therefore, that we may, and ought to make use of this Parable, is to perswade, and exhort, poor Souls to come at in the Call.

1. *Motives.* And for Motives, consider that Eternity of weal or woe, depends upon the well or ill spending of a little time. *Eccod. 11.*

3. *If the Tree falleth towards the South, or towards the North, in the place where it falleth, there it shall be* : A little moment let slip, may lose Heaven and happiness, and plunge us under the unsupportable Vengeance of an infinite God : Oh, *While it is called to day, harden not your hearts so long, till God swear in his Wrath, you shall not enter into his*

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his Rest. Heb. 3. 11, 15. After the Lord had Sworn in his wrath they should not enter; it was then too late to attempt it, as appears, *Numb.* 14. 42. 43. 44. 45. Let us not say, we have bought a Farm, bought Oxen, or Married a Wife; but come at the first invitation, lest the door be shut, and you stand and knock to no purpose. *Prov.* 1. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28. It will be a dreadful thing, for the great God to laugh at poor Souls in their misery: surely that will increase their misery. If one were in great distress, and should see one that had power to help, that would only look upon him, but not pity him, nor yield any relief to him; it would be very grievous to him. But if he should stand and mock at him; it would be much more grievous. To hear such a one say, Nay, you are served well enough. I called upon you to avoid the danger, but you sited my Advice, though I proffer'd to save you out of it; yea, I pray'd you, and intreated you, to let me help you out of this horrible Pit, but ye refused, *Psal.* 40. 2. No intreaty would serve, therefore if you can now save your self do; I'll have nothing to do with you. This will greatly increase their woe; even so, and much more will be the aggravations of their torment, who shall have the Lord speak so to them as *Prov.* 1. 20,

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22, 23, 24. O that poor Souls would not let slip the day of Grace ; *My spirit shall not always strive with Man, for that he also is flesh.* Gen. 6. 3.

Shall God in pity say, as he did to *Isael* of old, *Deut. 32. 29.* O that they were Wise, that they would consider this, that they would remember their latter end.

And shall we not regard it : it will be sad with those Souls that shall make light of the Call, till God will send no more after them ; but shall send to those that will come ; and for ever exclude those bidden ones : and they forced to cry out, as they in *Jeremy*, *Jer. 8. 20.* *The Harvest is past, and the Summer is ended, and we are not saved.*

2 Motive, To come at the Call of God, is because we are every day further off from God then other ; we are like a Ship under Sayl, driven by fierce Winds ; it cannot stand still, but is in perpetual motion, toward some Port or other ; and is every hour nearer to the place whither they are bound, so long as the Wind is for them. Those that are bound for Hell (as all Men and VVomen in the VVorld are before Conversion) they get nearer and nearer Hell every day ; and they run a very swift Course, the Devil trims the Sails, and raiseth the wind of temptation, and

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and makes good the Proverb, *They must needs go, that the Devil drives* : But he perswades them they were bound for Heaven, that blessed Country that *Abraham* sought after ; for the Devil in this, is like those Men that are called Spirits, that flatters Children with fair words, and fine toyes, to go with them, till they have got them out of the reach of all relief ; and then, and not till then ; they will let them see they are certainly Slaves past all Recovery.

Oh be not such Children, as to be flatter'd with worldly toyes, out of the hope of Heavenly joyes ; and so suffer your selves to be carried into endless woes : For remember, till you tack about, you are nearer Hell every day ; and so consequently, further off from God, and Christ, and Glory : O remember whither you are going, and turn again before it be too late : Let not Christ say of you as of the *Jews*, *Ye will not come to me, that you might have life*, *John 5. 40.* O that poor men and women, would take Counsel of Wisdom, crying after them, *Prov. 1. 20, 21, 22. 23, 24.* *Turn at my Reproof, I will pour out my Spirit unto you ; I will make known my words unto you.* O harken, before it be too late, hear that your Souls may live, *Isa. 55. 3.* Let not Satan get you one step nearer Hell, before you turn.

3. *Motive,*

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3. *Motive.* Those Souls that delay to return and come in upon the invitation, will make their work more hard and difficult, if ever they do reform.

First. Because the longer they go on in sin, the more hardned they will be in sin, *Heb. 3.*

13. But exhorts one another daily, while it is called to day, viz. (While the day of Grace and opportunity last) lest any of you be hardned by the deceitfulness of sin. Sin is deceitful, and the Devil is deceitful, and mans heart is deceitful; and these three agree in one. *Jer.*

17. 9. Even to deceive poor Souls with the Golden Baits of worldly injoyments, till Repentance be hid from their Eyes: And so their Oyl be so seek when the Bride-groom comes, and the door be shut.

Secondly. It will be difficult to return after long delays because Custome is as it were a second nature. *Jer. 13. 25.* Can the Ethiopian change his Skin? or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil. We know Old Ulcers, are hardly, hardly, Clensed, and Cured; when an easie and speedy Cure may be made of a Green Wound. Poyson when it is first taken, may be expel'd; but by continuance in the body, till it have infected the Vitals, the Cure will be very difficult and hazardous.

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37. The longer we go on in sin, the more difficult will be our return; because one sin draws on another; and so we shall have more sins to repent of, and the more work we have to do, the more discouragement will be as to the undertaking of it: Repentance is of necessity, and seeing it is so, it will be easier to repent of sin betime: It is a kind of madness for a man to go on in a Trade, that he knows he must repent that ever he medled with it; and must throw it off, or else it will utterly undo him; every one will say, The sooner the better. Better to be rid of such an Employment that a man loses by every day; we lose by sin every day, and treasure up wrath against the day of wrath. If a fire kindle upon our House, the way to quench it, is not to add more fuel to it. Now Sin sets Soul and Body on fire; *And the breath of the Lord, as a stream of Brimstone, doth kindle it.* Isa. 30. 33. The Devil knows what he does, in perswading Souls to delay their coming in at the first Call; he knows that the work of returning will be more difficult: If a Nail be but entred, it may be easier pull'd out, then if by continual knocking it is driven up to the head: To add sin to sin, is as to add to a burden, to make it to be carried the more easily. This is like what is said, *Deut. 29. 19. When*

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the Curse of God is pronounced against sin, and one say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of my own heart; to add Drunkenness to Thirst. See what the Lord saith, ver. 20. The Lord will not spare him, but his anger and his Jealousie, shall smite against him; and all the Curses that are Written in this Book, shall lye upon him. O then take heed of delays; for the work will be more difficult to morrow, then it is to day: O then while it is called to day, harden not thy heart.

4. *Motive*, Come in quickly, for else thou may'st not have so much time to serve the Lord, as thou hast spent in serving the Devil, who is thy deadly Enemy, who intends nothing but thy eternal Ruine.

5. *Motive*, Consider thou hast run a great hazard all this while; the Lord might have cut asunder the thred of thy life before now, and thou mightest have dropt into Hell, from whence there is no Redemption; and wilt thou venture still; if once he strike, he will strike home.

6. *Motive*, Consider what thou losest by delays.

First, Thou losest the presence of God; the Communion of Saints, the comfort of the Holy Spirit, which although the wicked men count the Godly fools, and think they live

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a mopish, uncomfortable life, yet is their joy as the joy of Harvest; and as those that find a great spoil. Isa. 9. 3. see 1 Joh. 1. 4. Psal. 16. 11. see, 1 Pet. 1. 8. So that by delaying to come at the first, although at last thou do come, yet thou art a great loser, in regard of that early joy, which thou mightest have had by comming in sooner. For the Lord doth not call upon thee to come and make thy condition worse than before. It is a madness to think that the Devils service is more comfortable then Gods.

Secondly, Thou lovest the advantage of becoming famous in grace and holiness; if a man be in a thriving way, yet if he fall into it but a little before he dye, he is not like to be very Rich. Oh, therefore hearken to the Call betime, that so thou may'st be rich in Grace, rich in good Works, and then thou shalt have a rich Reward in the Kingdom of Glory.

Thirdly, By delayes thou may'st lose all, and come as the Foolish Virgins did. Mat. 25. When the Door was shut; and as those Mat. 7. 22. That Prophesied in the Name of Christ, and cast out Devils in his Name; and yet cannot be admitted. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the Door, Luk. 13. 25. It will be then no boot to knock

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knock; And this is a loss indeed: to lose the favour of God, the love of Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the Communion of all the blessed Angels, and Saints; to lose Heaven, and happiness, and all the Glory and Felicity, which was tendered to thee in the invitation.

But that is not all; but those that lose God, gain the Devil; those that lose Heaven, gain Hell; which gain is a dreadful loss: as will more fully appear, by setting forth some of the properties of Heaven, and Hell, and setting the one against the other.

1. As first, In Heaven there is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; in Hell is the Devil and all his Angels.

2. In Heaven there is an innumerable Company of Glorified Saints, and Angels; in Hell there is an innumerable Company of wicked, damn'd Spirits.

3. In Heaven there is nothing but Joy and Singing; in Hell is nothing but weeping, and wailing.

4. In Heaven there is Glorious Light, that no Mortal Eye can approach unto; in Hell there is utter Darkness, *Mat. 22, 13.* Blackness of Darkness, of Darkness for ever. *¶*

5. Oh what a disparity is here? between these two! the Darkness of Egypt was but

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a Figure of this Black Darknes. And as it is very comfortable to behold the Light; so it is very dreadful to be deprived of all Light; to be alone in the Dark is frightful; especially if it be outer Darknes; but ten thousand times better to be quite alone, then to be in the midst of innumerable Devils, and frightful damn'd Spirits.

5. In Heaven is whatever may delight both Soul, and Body; but in Hell there is whatever may add to misery and torment, of soul and body.

1. As first, There is fire into which they shall be cast, that have their portion there.

2. And as it is Fire (which in it self is dreadful) even so it is the worst fire; viz. Brimstone, and Fire; even as God when he would pour out his wrath upon Sodom (*who suffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire*) Jude,

7. *It was with Brimstone, and fire from the Lord out of Heaven* Gen. 19. 24. And it is hard to indure the stink of Brimstone and fire, though we feel not the burning of it. But some may say it is not material Fire; to which one make answer, and says, Then it is worse; because that the Figure is not answerable to the substance: So that at the best, it is Fire and Brimstone; Oh, how dreadful will it be to endure it? When I have had the
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the Smoak of Brimstone ascend into my Nostrils; it hath been terrible, though but for a moment: And when I have stood by a burning Oven; I have thought, Oh how dreadful would it be to be alive in that flame? though but for a very little space.

3. This fire is dark fire, the comfortable property of Light is taken from it; for in Hell there must be nothing that can yield any comfort.

4. Again, It is such fire that will not consume the matter that is laid into it; but the fire and the Fuel (to wit, Devils and wicked men) must remain and abide in that fire together.

5. And therefore *this Fire is Eternal* Jude, 7. *Everlasting*; Mat. 25. 41. And this makes it dreadful indeed: All the miseries of this life will quickly end, they are but light and momentary, 2 Cor. 4. 17. But these shall never end; and this doth complete the misery of the Damn'd: There will be no end of their misery; no ease in their misery, no mitigation of their misery; no delivering out of their, nor relief in their misery. No end as is said before; and as one saith, If the Damn'd did know, that he should suffer no more thousands of years, then there be Sands in the Sea: or no more Millions of

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Ages, then there be Sands in the Sea; it would much comfort him; but alas, it is ever still. Another Writes thus, suppose the whole Globe of the Earth were a Mountain of Sand; and fill'd up with Sand to the Imperial Heavens, and a Wren should come once in an hundred years, and fetch away the tenth part of a Grain of this Sand; if when all this Sand was fetcht away, the Devil might come out of Hell, it would be some comfort to them: But still it is as before, it is for ever still; Oh, what an amazing consideration is this; and yet how few lay it to heart.

Now considering these things, is it not folly and madness to reject, or but neglect to come to the Marriage upon the first Call, of the Lords Servants that are sent to invite *thence* *How shall they escape, that neglect so great Salvation*; All must come to the Wedding, or go to the Dungeon, *Where the worms never dyes, nor the Fire goes out.*

Consider there is no ease, as there is no end; if one did know certainly, that he must endure the pain but of an aking Tooth, without any ease, for the space of one whole Year: Oh! how grievous would the very thoughts of it be! How long doth one night seem

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seem to one in misery ? What shall we say to Eternity, when not any one Member shall be in pain ; but the whole Man, Soul, and Body, shall be in pain ; in torment, not only for a Night, or a Year, but for ever ; in which there is no intermission, no hope, no relief, no not a drop of water for ever, to cool a flaming Tongue : all hope of help being cut off for ever : Lay all these Motives together (to which many might be added) for a speedy coming in ; and then tell me, whether even reason it self, will not conclude it is best to hear, that your Souls may live.

I/a. 55. 3.

Will a Months living in pleasure, in pride, in the eager persute of Riches ; make amends for the loss of the Glory mentioned before ; and for undergoing of wrath and vengeance in Hell fire. *Man being in honour, abideth not.* Psal. 49. 12. Yet in ver. 11, it is said, Their inward thoughts is their houses shall continue for ever ; and they call their Lands after their own Names, *ver. 13.* This then is their folly : Indeed it is egregious folly to lose Heaven, for a little Earth ; Heavenly treasure, for Earthly pleasure, for a Barley Corn, to lose the Pearl of great price. *Alas, All flesh is Grass, and all the Glory of Man, as the flowers of the Grass.*

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*the Grass withereth, and the Flower fadeth away; How oft do we see the Flower wither before the Sibe come to cut down the Grass: How oft do we see the Glory of Man: issue, before he leave the World? And yet what a little, little time, do they abide in the World. The Sibe comes and Mows down this Grass speedily. I my self have seen in some Families two, and in some three, Generations pass away; few attaining to Moses account, of threescore years and ten, as *Psal. 90. 10.* But if they do, it quickly comes about; and it will be our great Mercy, *If the Lord so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to Wisdom.**

Quest. What is to be done?

Ans. The first step is to see our selves utterly lost: *First*, By natural defilement. *Secondly*, By actual sin, by which we have made our selves more vile in the sight of God, then the vilest of the Creatures upon Earth: Those in the *Acts*, never cryed out, *What shall we do*; till they were pricks at their hearts; and they were not prickt at their hearts, till they saw themselves lost by sin, and obnoxious to the Wrath of God by reason thereof: We will never go to the Physicians till we be sick: Labour to affect thy heart

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heart with the filthy nature of sin, it made Glorious Angels, ugly Devils; if man that was made after the Image of God, more vile then a Toad, or Serpent: Yea, one Sin brought a Curse upon the whole VWorld, then consider what a World of Sins will do to one man.

Again consider, that although thou have forgot most of thy sins, which are without number: God hath not forgot any of them, but they are all charged in Gods Book, till Repentance wipe out the Score.

Again consider, That so longas thou continuest in thy sinful state, thou art pleasing and serving the Devil, instead of God, and he is thy God, though thou think not so it may be.

Again consider, How little time thou hast for so great a work, as to make thy Calling and Election sure; and it may be a great deal less then thou art aware of.

Then again consider, The infinite Grace and patience of God, thou mightest have been in Hell; stand and wonder thou art not: O let mercy melt thee; let Grace move thee; let this love of Christ constrain thee: he that dyed for sinners to save them from their sins, and from the Wrath of God.

1 Pet. 3. 18. 1 Thes. 1. 10. He hath sent his

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his Servants, to compel thee to come in, by Wooings, beseechings, intreatings, then why wilt thou famish among the Swine? seeing there is a plentiful Marriage Feast prepared for thee, if thou wilt but come and accept of it. Come then without delay, for all things are ready. God hath given Christ, Christ hath given himself, he hath ascended up on high, and given Gifts unto Men, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry. Eph. 4. And he hath made his Ministers willing to spend, and he spent, for the good of poor Souls in all Ages. Many of which have witnessed a good Confession unto Death, for the sake of poor Souls. He hath given us his Laws, his Ordinances, his Scriptures; Yea, and will give us his Spirit also, if we will but come and ask it. Prov. 1. 22. Come therefore, for all things are ready, Prov. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Quest. But what must I do that I may be welcome when I do come?

Ans. First, Come willingly, and cheerfully, come as a hungry man goes to a Rich Dinner; for such are invited. Rev. 22. 17. Job 7. 37. Luke 1. 53. Such have the promise. Mat. 5. 6.

Secondly,

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Secondly, Come prepared with a Wedding Garment.

1. *Direct. First, Be sure put off all thy Old Rags of Sin, and Ungodliness, Isa. 55:*

6, 7. *Direct. Secondly, Put off all the Rags of thy Unrighteousness, Isa. 64. 6. For although thou must do good works to glorifie God, and do good to men; yet take heed of making this thy Wedding Garment, for which thou wouldst be accepted.*

Secondly, Having put off thy old Rags, put on the New Robe of Christs Righteousness, that fine Linnen. Rev. 19. 8. Put ye on the Lord Jesus, Rom. 13. 14.

3. *Direct. Thirdly, Take heed of defiling thy Garments, for those that are careful in this, Shall walk with the Bridegroom in White, in the Marriage Chamber. Rev. 3. 4. We see among People, a great care to have the body adorned; but, O the little care of keeping themselves unspotted of the World; that is to be found among many: When they are to go into the presence of the King, to stand before him, and to hear his voice in the Ministry of his Word. I am afraid, many professing Godliness, take more care, and spend*

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spend more time to have their Garments fashionable and compleat ; and their Attire neatly set, then they do to have their Souls trimmed for to come before the Bridegroom ; the time spent in Prayer is but little, which many before they go before the Lord, that they might *be helped to serve God acceptably, with Reverence and Godly fear* ; as Heb. 12. 28. I desire that our fine fashionable People, would Read conscionably, 1 Pet. 3. 3. 4. 5. That they might lay aside their bables, and *learn of the Holy Women that trusted in God, to adorn themselves.* I fear indeed that while so much care is taken for the Body, to adorn it ; it is no other then the Fruit of a proud heart ; which renders a person more odious in the Eyes of the King of Heaven, then the nastiest Begger, with his Lousie Rags, would be in the presence of an Earthly King.

Pride is not the only defiling sin, there are more attending it ; for there must be Covetousness to maintain pride : and as pride promotes Covetousness, so also Uncharitableness, is Prides Hand-maid : But in a word, every sin is a stain in the VVhite Linnen ; O therefore, watch against evil words with David. 93. Psal. 1. VVatch against thoughts. Jer. 4. 14. VVatch against evil actions.

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actions. And in order hereunto ; labour against a Carnal frame, a Dead frame, a Backsliding frame ; and labour after *Calebs* frame, *who followed the Lord fully, and the Lord brought him unto the promised Land, when others fell in the Wilderness.* Even so the Lord, (if thou follow him fully, and faithfully) will certainly bring thee into Eternal Rest with the Bride Groom ; when others are shut out among the Dogs. *see Rev. 21. 7, 8. and Chap. 22. 14, 15.*

Again, As thou art careful to have admittance into the Marriage-Chamber, to have a VVedding Garment, and to have it clean ; so be careful of thy Family ; wouldst thou not be glad to have thy Friends and Relations admitted ? take heed thou do not promote sin, nor countenance sin in any : It is grievous to see how many Parents promote Pride in their Children, dressing them up with toys ; which is as it was a watering of that Cursed Root : You may observe how the Child will mince and jet, when it is made more fine then ordinary : And so by this means, *instead of bringing them up in the nurture and Admonition of the Lord ;* They further them in the service of the Devil. But I must close all ; Now therefore to that end, thee and thine may not fail of entertainment
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is the Marriage Chamber; pray often and earnestly, not only publicly, but also privately: Hear the word of God constantly, conscientiously, and diligently; labour to retain it carefully, prove what thou hearest knowingly; and what thou findest to be the mind of God, practice it faithfully, bring thy duty into practice effectually, and zealously, and God shall make thee happy eternally.

ent among the Doct. in Rev. 21. 7. 8. and 14. 13.

Again, As thou art careful to have admittance into the Marriage Chamber, to have a Wedding Garment, and to have it clean; so be careful of thy Family; wouldst thou not be glad to have thy Friends and Relations comforted? Take heed thou do not promote it, nor countenance it in any: It is given to see how many Parents promote Pride in their Children, dressing them up with toys, which is but a watering of that Root: You may observe how the will mires and fet, what it is made of: And so by this means they destroy it: And so by this means they destroy it: They destroy it by the service of the Devil. But I must close all: Now therefore to that end, and mine may be the tail of contentment.

